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ABSTRACT

In this speech, the author, a principal, describes his experiences with teacher evaluation in a Canadian high school. He observes that checklists are too harsh, cold, and sometimes brutal, and insists that the evaluation of teacher performance is a personal matter because of the very personal nature of teaching. The author notes that he tries to observe each teacher in his school for one complete period each semester. He describes this observation and the subsequent discussion with the teacher. In the discussion the principal and the teacher discuss how the teacher may improve his instruction and techniques. (JF)

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NASSP Convention
March 17-22, 1972
Anaheim, California

A Presentation

on

"EVALUATING TEACHER PERFORMANCE - HOW TO GET BEYOND THE CHECKLIST"

by

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Miller Comprehensive High School
1027 College Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

March 20, 1972

EA 004 219

May I at the outset say how pleased I was to have received an invitation from our president, W. Hobart Millsaps, to present a paper on "Evaluating Teacher Performance - How to Get Beyond the Checklist". I deem it an honour and a privilege to represent High School Principals from Saskatchewan, Canada and in particular - Miller Comprehensive High School and the Separate High School Board.

A little background first. Miller Comprehensive High School had a Semester I enrollment of 1757 students - Grades IX - XII inclusive. I have a staff of 80 teachers. The courses offered at Miller range from purely academic to Business and Vocational-Technical. Courses are also given in Fine Arts, Cosmetology, Food Services, Radio and T.V. Arts and Computer Science. We have our own closed-circuit Television patterned after Nova High School, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and house an IBM 1130 Computer.

You might call our school a progressive school. The staff and I are not afraid to try new ideas such as differentiated teaching, individual scheduling, student contract learning, crash courses in some of the academics to coincide with the opening of the mid-winter university classes (university classes are semestered), preparation of complete set of video-tape instruction in Grade IX Mathematics (Doliciani text in Mathematics used in grades IX-XII), Computer scored tests which are teacher prepared, etc. I could go on.

With this little bit of background, let me get on with the topic, "Evaluating Teacher Performance."

What I am going to say to you this morning is not a theory but a down-to-earth procedure on the evaluation of teacher performance which I have been developing with my staff for the better part of two years. Criticism is often

levelled at us, about getting involved in trivia and forgetting one of the most important functions of a principal, that of evaluating teacher performance.

Evaluating teacher performance to me is a highly "personal matter". Checklists are too harsh, cold and sometimes can become brutal. Teachers hopefully teach people - young people. Teaching, too, is a highly personal matter. One does not teach English, or Mathematics, or any other subject per se, but rather one teaches people about English, Mathematics and other disciplines. Evaluating teacher performance becomes a personal matter because of the very personal nature of teaching.

To follow this premise then, I first of all try to establish a teacher-administrator rapport or call it "open-climate" which hopefully will enhance this highly delicate and personal evaluation of teacher performance.

The philosophy of teacher evaluation is always stressed i.e., to improve instruction and techniques in order that students may learn and perform better. Evaluation is never a witch-hunt or a check list clearly marked, signed and left in the teacher's mail box.

In my 2 1/2 years as principal, I have tried to follow this philosophy. Procedures are still being developed and refined. I can recall when I first became principal, I tried to use a checklist in evaluating teacher performance. (I have a copy attached to this paper.) I sensed resentment on the part of the teacher, relationships became strained and I found it difficult to assign a letter grade of performance and justify it.

At present, I tell teachers to expect me sometime during the Semester - I try to see each teacher for one complete period, beginning to end, once a semester. This gives me a complete picture of how the teacher performs with his class for that one instructional period.

After the visit, the teacher and I mutually agree to sit down and talk about the visit, preferrably the same day. The time is always convenient for the teacher.

When we do meet for this discussion session, I again point out to the teacher my purpose for having visited him, namely - "to improve the instructional program for the students in his charge." In no way is criticism implied and I mention to the teacher that the questions I might ask are simply asked to show him what I feel should be important aspects of teacher performance.

I first of all point out the obvious good aspects of the lesson. Perhaps refer to the teacher's confidence and knowledge of subject matter if this is evident, the learning situation - relaxed, detection of humor on part of the teacher or the class, the efficient way in which routine matters were taken care of, etc. There is always some thing nice to say about any teacher's performance.

I then proceed to ask questions so as to stimulate thought on the teacher's part of how to improve the teaching process.
Questions such as:

1. What was the purpose of your introduction to the lesson?
2. I detected a lack of preparation - Perhaps I am wrong, but how did you prepare?
3. What did you expect to get out of your questioning at some specific point in the lesson?
4. What did you think of the two students that dominated the discussion on Hamlet's Procrastination?
5. Was the whole class involved?
6. I liked the way you answered that question, but did all the class hear you? What about the two boys over on the far side?

7. What was the purpose of the project? Were the posters all acceptable?
8. What evaluation procedures do you follow?
9. Are students aware of the continuous evaluation policy?
10. There are no formal final examinations, do your students know the significance of this fact?
11. Was any assignment given the previous day? How did you treat it?
12. Are you satisfied that the goals you set for your class achievement have been reached?
13. How could you have improved the lesson?

One teacher was teaching a lesson in English poetry and during the course of the lesson said, "If I had a map here I would show you the place referred to." This was a most damning statement of lack of preparation. I could easily point out to him that one never allows this kind of thing to happen. He agreed. I don't think it will ever happen again as long as he works in the classroom.

Routine matters such as attendance must be looked after by each class teacher. We take it at the beginning of every period. I would like to do without this, but in Saskatchewan, average daily attendance does determine government grants to a particular school district. Teachers have had to be checked on this matter.

During our post-lesson get-together, I have countless opportunity to help the teacher to improve by my suggestions and my observations. One does not have to be an expert in all subject fields in a comprehensive school to be able to evaluate teacher performance in terms of the objectives the teacher sets for himself in each lesson. If he has no purpose, he soon finds out and I feel my job is well done. He soon realizes what my expectations are and for that matter what his should be for every class he teaches.

The teacher and I mutually arrive at a general statement of performance at

the end, such as outstanding, good, satisfactory, improvement necessary, but never a failure.

The evaluation of a non-competent teacher is entirely a different and a more difficult matter. But here too - no check list. Specifics will be mentioned. Records will be kept and evaluation is done more frequently not only by me but by the Superintendent. In all of this, time is a big factor.

To carry out this technique of evaluating teacher performance, I must some how find more time to spend with teachers. The ideal situation as I see it would require at least four full days to be spent with each teacher, two per semester (or 4 half days). Thus, it would become a full time job for one individual in an 80 teacher school. I am trying to convince our Director of Education and the School Board of this need, if one is to do an effective job of evaluating teacher performance. I am further convinced that there is no other exercise that a principal could undertake that would enhance the learning process more than that which improves the instructional program in the classroom.

I have indeed enjoyed talking to you wonderful people from across the United States and Canada and I humbly hope that sharing my experiences in this matter of "Evaluating Teacher Performance - How to Get Beyond the Checklist", with you, will help in some way the cause of education in America.

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   second edition

   Prentice-Hall Inc.

3. Self-evaluation:
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   Published by the Alberta Teachers' Association
   Edmonton, Alberta

MILLER COMPOSITE HIGH SCHOOL
Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

TEACHER - PERFORMANCE RATING

Date: _____

(Family Name) _____ (Christian Names) _____

Rate by checking (✓) the appropriate section:

Outstanding | Good | Average | Fair | Poor | Not Rated

I. PERSONAL QUALITIES

1. Dress and Appearance
2. Poise and Manner
3. Emotional Maturity
4. Voice and Speech
5. Initiative

II. PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES

1. Level of Scholarship (High School and College)
2. Skill in Communication
3. Written and Spoken language
4. Interest in Teaching
5. Understanding of students
6. Relationship with Colleagues
7. Effort in personal improvement through reading, study, research, and participation in professional activities

III. TEACHING COMPETENCE

1. Ability to Arouse Interest
2. Demonstrated Knowledge of Subject Matter
3. Selection and Use of Appropriate Materials
4. Variety and Effectiveness of Teaching Procedures
5. Provision for Individual Differences
6. Evaluation Strategies
7. Preparation, Assignment and Correction of Work

IV. SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY

1. Classroom Control
2. Relationship with Pupils
3. Records and Reports
4. Daily and Long-Range Planning
5. Classroom Routine
6. Readiness to assume responsibility

(Family Name) (Christian Names)

Rate by checking (✓) the appropriate section:

	Outstanding	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	Not Rated
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1. Dress and Appearance						
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3. Records and Reports						
4. Daily and Long-Range Planning						
5. Classroom Routine						
6. Readiness to assume responsibility, curricular and extra-curricular						

GENERAL COMMENTS: Over-All Performance(Rating):

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Special Abilities: _____

_____

Additional Comments: _____

_____

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_____
Principal or Teacher

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